

SC No. 10390/67  
20 December 1967

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Preliminary Assessment of Black Shield  
Photography of 15 and 16 December

Summary

Two double-pass BLACK SHIELD missions flown over North Vietnam on 15 and 16 December provided cloud-free photographic coverage of about 67 percent of the country, including Hanoi, Haiphong, and the panhandle area. All of North Vietnam's six major airfields, 221 of the 226 usable SA-2 sites, about 80 percent of the entire rail network, and 30 priority bridges and 21 priority rail yards for bomb damage assessment were photographed. No evidence of surface-to-surface missile deployment was noted.

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Directorate of Intelligence.

1. Two double-pass BLACK SHIELD missions flown over North Vietnam on 15 and 16 December provided cloud-free photography of about 67 percent of the country, including Hanoi, Haiphong, and the panhandle area. Mission 6739 (15 December) obtained 85-percent cloud-free coverage during its two passes--one up the Red River valley and the other along the China border area. Mission 6740 (16 December) obtained 60-percent cloud-free coverage during its two passes--one parallel to the Red River valley about 20-25 miles southwest of it and the other down through the panhandle. No evidence of surface-to-surface missile deployment was noted.

2. Surface-to-Air Missile Sites: Together the two missions photographed 221 of North Vietnam's 226 usable SA-2 sites--including six new sites. Of the 221 sites covered, 17 were occupied--including five of the six new sites, 197 were unoccupied, and seven sites could only be identified.

3. Air Order-of-Battle and Airfields: A total of 8 to 12 operational MIG fighters--four to five MIG-21s and four to seven MIG-15/17s were photographed on North Vietnamese airfields by the 15 December mission. The air order-of-battle estimate for that date was 13 MIGs--six MIG-21s and seven MIG-15/17s. At Phuc Yen Airfield, two to three operational MIG-21s, six probably destroyed MIGs, and one dummy MIG-21 were observed. Two operational MIG-21s and four to six operational MIG-15/17s were seen at Kep Airfield. In addition, one possibly operational MIG-15/17 was observed at Hanoi/Gia Lam Airfield. The 16 December mission showed two probably damaged MIG-15/17s and one dummy MIG at Hoa Lac Airfield. All of the six major airfields of North Vietnam, except Haiphong/Cat Bi, appeared to be serviceable in the 15 December photography, but three of these airfields--Phuc Yen, Kep, and Haiphong/Kien An--have been hit since then by air strikes.

4. Land Transportation System: The two missions photographed 100 percent of the Haiphong-Hanoi, Dong Dang-Hanoi, and Kep-Thai Nguyen-Hanoi rail lines. About forty percent of the Lao Cai-Hanoi

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rail line and about 60 percent of the Hanoi-Dong Hoi line were also covered.

5. At Haiphong, the railroad/highway bridge remains destroyed, but a rail ferry adjacent to the bridge is probably serviceable. The serviceability of this rail ferry by-pass is a new development and provides the North Vietnamese with a way to move freight cars to and from the port. This service had been denied since [redacted] when the original bridge was destroyed.

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6. At Hanoi, the two railroad/highway bridges were covered. The Canal des Rapides bridge was serviceable for both rail and highway traffic, and the Paul Doumer bridge was serviceable to highway and probably rail traffic. Both bridges have been attacked since the photography was taken and are now unserviceable. Each bridge has several rail and highway by-passes available so that the movement of goods can continue. In addition, two new highway pontoon and causeway by-passes were noted near the Paul Doumer bridge. This increases the total number of rail and highway by-passes within 15 miles of this bridge to 14.

7. On the Haiphong-Hanoi route, the railroad and highway bridges at Hai Duong and Ngoc Kuyet were covered. At Ngoc Kuyet, the main rail bridge is serviceable, but the highway bridge is unserviceable. This area has not been attacked recently. At Hai Duong, the rail bridge over the Song Thai Binh was unserviceable, but all rail and highway by-passes were serviceable. The Hai Duong Railroad Bridge East was serviceable, but two rail by-passes were unserviceable. A highway by-pass is serviceable. However, these bridges at Hai Duong have been struck again since this coverage.

8. The 16 December coverage of the Hanoi-Dong Hoi rail line indicated that it was serviceable as far south as Vinh. No new railroad construction activity on this route was detected.

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9. Also covered was the new rail line under construction between Hon Gai and Kep. Several short segments were discernible, and construction has progressed since the last coverage.

10. At Ping-hsiang 300-350 pieces of rolling stock were sighted. This is a continued decline of rail equipment since the high recorded in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The sighting of meter-gauge equipment strongly indicates that some transloading from standard-gauge still occurs despite the fact that the line south from Ping-hsiang into the DRV is dual-gauge. Probable vehicles near the freight platforms indicate rail-to-road transshipment is being carried on. In addition, 100 KAZ-65 trucks, seen stockpiled near the rail yard in [REDACTED] Black Shield photography, were no longer in the area.

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11. Industrial Installations: A few minor changes in the status of industrial installations were revealed by the 15 December mission. Smoke emanating from the Phu Tho fertilizer plant gives the first definite indication that the plant is in operation. Some repair work on the damaged Bac Giang chemical plant also is evident, but major reconstruction of several critical components and of the adjacent power plant is necessary before the chemical plant can be put into operation. Discharge of cooling waters effluent from the Viet Tri power plant, noted now for the second time, strongly suggests that the power plant is in partial operation rather than undergoing tests for start-up.

12. Suspect Cave Positions South of Hanoi: The 16 December mission photographed a complex of caves--with a possible hardstand weapon position under construction in front of each cave entrance--at Nui Lang Lau, about 40 miles south of Hanoi.

This facility was previously photographed on [REDACTED] [REDACTED], and no new construction activity could be seen in the Black Shield coverage.

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BLACK SHIELD ASSESSMENT

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